



The Minidoka Monument

NPS Receives Public Comment on Management Plan

The development of a General Management Plan (GMP) for Minidoka Internment National Monument continues.



Public Scoping Workshop Seattle, Washington, November 2002

In October 2002, the National Park Service published a public “scoping” newsletter announcing the beginning of the GMP planning process for the Monument. The purpose of the newsletter was to encourage the public’s participation and comments about the significance, purpose, and vision for the Minidoka Internment National Monument. The newsletter provided relevant information about the establishment of the National Monument, need for the Management Plan, and a schedule of the planning steps. Dates, times, and locations for scoping workshops were also published. In addition, the Monument’s website provided public scoping information and a press kit.

About 2,000 copies of the newsletter were sent to people on the Monument’s mailing list. An additional 3,000 copies were distributed to libraries, civic buildings, businesses, churches, museums, universities, communities and elected officials.

Public Participates in Meetings and Provides Written Comments

In November 2002 the National Park Service hosted nine public scoping workshops. Presentations were made about the National Park Service, on the history of Japanese American internment and incarceration during World War II, an overview of current site conditions, and the planning process. Small group work sessions helped people to present and discuss issues, experiences, and ideas for the Monument. Forty-five people attended the Idaho and Eastern Oregon workshops, 140 people participated in the Bainbridge/Seattle workshops, and 60 in Portland; 225 written responses were collected. These included letters, e-mails, packets of information, and newsletter questionnaires that were filled out and submitted.

What We Heard From You

We received input from a diverse group of people including former internees, their friends and families, former WRA staff, students, and the surrounding Eden and Twin Falls communities. We also received responses from interested individuals from throughout the United States; most of them have not been to the site nor had any connection to the internment story.

The comments covered a broad range of issues, concerns, personal experiences and recommendations for the Monument. When compiled, more than 120 different comments or ideas were represented. Because various statements

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First, I wish to say thank you! We asked for your participation and you responded, openly and warmly, and with conviction.

I want to emphasize the importance of your contributions, as they are essential to creating a solid vision for the Minidoka Internment National Monument. Your efforts have laid the foundation for the development of the Monument, so that it will remain current and engaging for future generations.

This newsletter reports on information we received from you, the public. The scoping results are rich in the diversity of opinions and experiences, especially those that relate to ‘how’ we should tell the stories. There is solid common support to ensure that information is presented accurately and objectively. Education is the pivotal issue. An overwhelming majority of people agreed that education should be the critical mission to meet long-term objectives for the Monument.

The personal meetings and communications between the planning team and each of you have been truly inspiring and instructive. Having so many people share very personal and sometimes painful recollections has galvanized our resolve to develop a plan that will candidly portray this chapter of American history. This includes communicating the experiences and hardships faced by Japanese Americans during World War II and honestly describing the reasons for their forced relocation and incarceration.

You told us that the message of internment is about civil liberties during war-time and the responsibility of all Americans to guard constitutional rights. The strength of our nation will be enhanced as we document, preserve, and instruct the young about this American story.

Please continue your support and involvement as together we define the character of Minidoka Internment National Monument. Again, thank you for your contributions and participation.

Neil King, Superintendent

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or ideas were mentioned repeatedly, groupings of similar comments appear once. Tabulations have been made on how often particular points were raised. All of the public comment will be used in developing the General Management Plan.

Issues and Concerns

Interpretation of the Internment and Incarceration Story

The single most common concern is related to **how the Minidoka internment story should be interpreted and presented to the public**. Most of the public thinks the

Monument is an important piece of America's history that must be effectively interpreted. Many people think that the general public has many misconceptions and a general lack of understanding about the internment story.

The overriding issue identified the Monument's importance in conveying the message that internment was a mistake and a violation of constitutional and civil rights. The

majority of respondents think the site should provide an accurate depiction of the plight of Japanese Americans and resident aliens during this period in American history. Commenters think **Minidoka should be portrayed as it was—an internment camp, not a summer camp**. Many feel Minidoka was a concentration camp, while others believe that term is inaccurate. Regardless, most agree Minidoka was a place where lives were forever changed as a result of a world at war, racism, prejudice, politics, economics and wartime hysteria.

The public consistently mentions that interpretation must provide insight into the Japanese American experience before, during and after internment.

They want it made clear that **prior to internment these were hard working people—the majority of whom were American citizens**.

Many had made significant contributions to their communities and their country over many decades.

After the bombing of Pearl Harbor, they were forced to abandon all they had worked for and were incarcerated in an unfamiliar and desolate place.

Many people think it is important for the Monument to explain the Japanese American culture and to convey why they reacted the way they did. Former internees describe how they were raised in a culture where authority was not questioned. At the time, no one suspected the internment ordeal would be as trying or long lasting. As a result of internment, **many families suffered significant financial losses**.

Internees stated that the National Park Service should provide accurate **descriptions of how internment affected people in different ways**. Many express that it is important for people to understand that for *Issei* (immigrant generation from Japan) and *Nisei* (first American-born generation) the internment experience was wrought with hopelessness and uncertainty. They describe **how internment resulted in the deterioration of the family unit**. Daily lives and routines were altered and meals were not eaten together by individual families. Many recall the psychological impact that the decline of traditional mother/father roles had on their parents. On the other hand some former internees describe the experience as among the best days of their lives. Ironically, the breakdown of family structure provided unique opportunities for socializing and fun. Many people state that the camp experience brought Japanese Americans together.

The **public often mentions how internees made the most of a difficult situation**. In the camps a variety of art forms flourished. These included literature, painting, crafts, and furniture making. Internees also made significant advancements in farming and agricultural practices and aided local farmers. Some refer to the cleared land and agriculture seen at the site today as the legacy of the camp's internees.

Comments convey that **in spite of their circumstances, the vast majority of internees remained patriotic Americans**. Many think it is very important that the Minidoka story include the contributions of the 100th/442nd Regimental Combat Team, Military Intelligence Service, and Japanese Americans in the Women's Army Corps. They cite the fact that the **442nd is the most decorated unit in American military history**, for its size and length of service. Compared to other camps, disproportionately large numbers of Minidoka men and women volunteered for the military.

Others think it is important that the federal government's loyalty questionnaires and the story of the No-No boys be presented. The public consistently states the impact the questionnaires (questions 27 & 28) had on internees. The confusion, misunderstanding and differences of

opinions associated with the **questionnaires resulted in the separation of families and removal of many Minidoka internees** to Tule Lake Segregation Center in northern California.

Several respondents believe there is a need for the Minidoka story to **include all who were impacted by internment**, including WRA staff, their families, military personnel, area farmers and the outlying community. Several people recall how sympathetic Caucasians and un-interned Japanese Americans helped the internees. Others state it is



Public Scoping Workshop
Seattle, Washington, November 2002

“Minidoka was a place where lives were forever changed.”

The Loyalty Questionnaire

In early 1943 the War Relocation Authority (WRA) and the army required all internees, 17 years and older, to respond to a questionnaire. Two questions were about military service and allegiance. Questions number 27 and 28 were part of the questionnaire referred to today as the Loyalty Questionnaire.

Question 27 on military service asked, "Are you willing to serve in the armed forces of the U.S.?"

Question 28, on "allegiance," asked, "Will you swear unqualified allegiance to the U.S.A. and forswear any form of allegiance or obedience to the Japanese emperor, or any other foreign government, power or organization?"

Responding with a "Yes, Yes" to both questions was difficult. Question 28 was particularly divisive, as parents were generally Japanese citizens while their children were Americans. Japanese immigrants were legally ineligible for U.S. citizenship, therefore answering "Yes" would make them people without a country.

Two thirds of the 120,000 internees were American citizens, and for many, the questions seemed absurd, since most had never even been to Japan. For some *Nisei* men, answering "Yes" to question 27 was, in essence, volunteering their services for a "suicide squad." Some who answered "No, No" felt the government's questions about loyalty and military service were simply unjust and offensive, given that they were American citizens behind barbed wire without due process of law.

Each individual and family struggled with the questions, weighing allegiances to country, family, and moral principles. The Loyalty Questionnaire affected each family in unique ways and created divisions among internees. Finally, those failing to respond and those answering "No" to either or both of the questions were transferred to the WRA Tule Lake Segregation Center in northern California. The Tule Lake "Yes-Yes" respondents were scattered to the nine other WRA centers; Minidoka received about 1,900 persons.

At Minidoka, 98.7% answered the loyalty questions with "Yes, Yes" responses.



Public Scoping Workshop participants contribute in a small-group discussion session.

important to tell the story of what happened to the camp buildings and land after the camp was abandoned.

Many think it is important to convey that **Japanese Americans went on to lead successful and productive lives after internment.** Some internees mention that internment actually opened up new opportunities for Japanese Americans, and that it had positive affects as well. Other internees want the National Park Service to emphasize the sacrifices that the *Issei* and *Nisei* made for the betterment of future generations. The presidential apology and Redress is part of the internment story according to several comments.

Most agreed that the internment and incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II is a very significant American story, and it is important to understand internment in the context of a nation at war—a time when fear, dislocation, and sacrifice overshadowed every segment of American society. Some members of the public feel strongly that the Monument and the internment story must also include the non-Japanese American perspective, capturing the character of rural life in an agricultural community, where personal hardships and primitive living conditions were common. Often-repeated phrases reflect how almost every adult in America was disrupted and impacted by wartime conditions. A few suggest there should be no Monument at all, stating that numerous World War II camps and bases have not received the same recognition.

The Message

The public strongly identifies the **internment story as relevant to modern day issues of individual freedom and civil rights.** Many state that Minidoka should stand in testament to how critical it is for all Americans to uphold the ideals that form the foundation of our democracy and to understand the fragility of democracy. Numerous respondents express concern that if the nation isn't vigilant, America could very easily repeat the same mistake. Parallels are drawn between the experiences of Japanese Americans during World War II and those of Muslim and Arab Americans today.



Public Scoping Workshop
Seattle, Washington, November 2002



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Minidoka Internment National Monument

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The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.



Public Scoping Workshop Bainbridge, Washington, November 2002

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December 9, 1942. Minidoka Relocation Center. Free-hand drawing class. Photo courtesy National Archives and Records Administration

Recollections of the Minidoka Internment Camp

Even after the passage of some 60 years, there are many images that remain vivid in the minds of former internees. When asked to recall significant aspects of the camp, barbed wire fencing, guard towers, barracks and armed guards are the elements of everyday life that they most remember. Others recall less ominous elements of the camp such as the canal and the swimming hole. Several people describe how normal aspects of everyday life continued despite incarceration, including births, marriages and deaths. Others describe how community and school activities played a major role in people's lives. Sports, music, dances, theatrical performances and community government were common activities.

Cultural Resources

Many of the former internees refer to the site as **hallowed ground, where the need to protect existing resources is of great importance**. Time and time again, the public states how important it is to capture oral histories while there is still time.

Visitor Experience

The public recognizes that the site's remote **location presents unique challenges**. First and

foremost, those that have visited Minidoka agree that the signage and directions to the site needs significant improvement. In addition, the public thinks the National Park Service should define how it is going to draw people to visit the site. Several commentaries note the lack of nearby lodging or camping for future visitors.

The public consistently states the need to provide a variety of educational experiences for visitors of all ages. **Many think education and learning should be the primary mission of the Monument**. Others add that the Monument should be a place of emotional healing and contemplation.

Former internees suggest that modern improvements—including roads and buildings not present at the camp during internment—make the **camp unrecognizable today**. Others think the 73-acres are insufficient to properly portray the camp and to interpret the Monument.

A few of the respondents don't want the site to change at all. They think the present landscape and memorial features at the Monument are appropriate and sufficient.

Facilities

The size and design of the potential new Monument facilities are of concern to several respondents. They think it is **important that the building(s), site improvements and parking facilities be appropriate for the site and not intrude upon or impact** the surviving remnants of the camp.

Several members of the contemporary **community that surrounds the Monument express concerns about how further development and visitation might impact or inconvenience them**. They are particularly concerned about any potential changes to existing access and traffic generated by the Monument. Specifically, local respondents do not want traffic restrictions in and around the Monument.

Collections

Former internees mention that **they have artifacts and memorabilia to donate**. Some think the Monument should establish a plan for collections, artifact preservation, and what should be exhibited and used for interpretation.

Connections Off-Site

A number of people think it is important to make the connection between Minidoka and the other

internment camps and assembly centers so **people understand the whole story**. Another issue is how to tell the story off-site in Seattle, Portland, and other parts of the country where former internees now live.

Environmental Issues

Local residents raise questions regarding water quality, water sources, the historic, present and future use of water, and the rights associated with surface water and groundwater at the site. It is suggested that historic uses or activities may have included underground fuel storage, chemical storage, coal disposal, septic and wastewater treatment, and dumping. Inquiries are also made concerning potential contaminants and the environmental impacts historic uses had on groundwater and soil at the site.

Operations/Management

There is general concern over how to **protect the site's resources**. Many think the Monument should have a full-time onsite staff to watch over the property and perform routine maintenance. Several people express concern over vandalism and defacing the Monument.

Area residents emphasize the **lack of utilities and community services** available in the area. The availability of water, fire protection and emergency medical services are particularly worrisome.

Even after the passage of some 60 years, there are many images that remain vivid in the minds of former internees.



A contrast in conditions at the Minidoka Relocation Center: August 1942, above; December 1942, below. Photos courtesy National Archives and Records Administration



“Minidoka should stand in testament to . . . the fragility of democracy.”

Other less frequently mentioned issues range from the need to advertise the Monument to concern over **adequate funding to develop and maintain the facility**. Several people suggest that a coordinated effort to preserve all the camps should be initiated so that individual internment sites will not compete for funding and political capital.

Partnerships

Several people express concern over how the Monument relates to the **Jerome County Farm and Ranch Museum**.

The museum owns one of the former Minidoka barracks and offers periodic interpretive programs related to the internment story.

Suggestions

The public has many suggestions about how the Minidoka internment story should be presented at the Monument.

These suggestions range from broad management proposals to specific ideas for programming and displays. **Almost all agree that a visit to Minidoka should be a memorable and educational experience.**

Visitor Experience

Time and time again, we hear how the Minidoka story should **personalize the experience of the internees**. Some state they want to be sure the visitor is impacted by what they learn during their visit.

Several people suggest the internees' arrival experience should be replicated for the visitor utilizing buses. People feel the historic gated entry should be clearly expressed to the visitor. **The remains of the guard station and waiting room could be restored** and utilized as part of the arrival experience.

Most people think the Monument should **provide a diversity of visitor experiences**, including self guided interpretive trails, and walking, bus, and driving tours. A visitor center, a partial reconstruction of the camp, interpretive signage and memorials are also frequently

suggested. Some of the respondents want the Monument to provide a living history component.

Some people request that information be provided in Japanese as well as English.

Visitor Center

The vast majority of respondents state it is important that the Monument include a year-round visitor center. The public's vision for the visitor center is quite diverse and includes facilities common and uncommon to National Monuments. Some of the suggested facilities include a museum, a library, a conference center, a race relations research center or an Asian American think-tank.

Specific recommendations for the center include artifact displays, photographs, interpretive exhibits, audio-visual programs (documentaries), and a scale model of the camp. The public suggests the **interpretive programs be updated regularly so visitors will want to return**. Some want a website created to obtain information from former internees. Several people suggest the visitor center incorporate the latest computer simulation and virtual reality capabilities—possibly providing a virtual tour of the camp as it existed during WWII, complete with howling winds and frigid temperatures.

Camp Reconstruction

Most of the public agrees the Monument visitor should get a sense of the physical size and look of Minidoka without complete reconstruction of the entire 33,000-acre camp. However, there is an array of reconstruction ideas for the 73-acre site. The public thinks that the **facilities should be appropriate for the site, non-intrusive, and not impact** the remnant features of the camp.

The vast majority of comments address how important it is for the visitor to **get a feel for the camp as it existed at the time of internment**. Many feel the need for an authentic experience where the visitor gets an accurate understanding of the day-to-day life and routines in the camp, including the methods used to create a semblance of normalcy, cramped conditions, schools, and poor medical

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August 17, 1942. Internees, arriving via train from the assembly center at Puyallup, Washington, were transported by bus to the Minidoka Relocation Center. Photos courtesy National Archives and Records Administration

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attention. Many of the internees recall the food with particular disdain. They commented that foods such as Vienna sausages and mutton were not part of their diets and were unfamiliar.

Time and time again, the respondents express the importance of having a barrack or even a complete

reconstruction of a block of barracks to **depict the typical living conditions**. They feel the barrack(s) should be complete with a potbelly stove, cots, clotheslines and cracks between the tarpaper walls and plank flooring. In addition to the barracks, many describe the crude communal restroom facilities as a critical component to the depiction of camp living.

Several people make suggestions for additional uses of the reconstructed barracks. These uses include National Park Service staff housing, guest housing, conference housing and a Boy Scout camp.

“Compared to other camps, disproportionately large numbers of Minidoka men and women volunteered for the military.”

Significant Camp Features to be Restored

When asked to recall significant aspects of the camp, **many remembered the physical conditions; both living under armed military police as well as the sparse and crowded living conditions**. Of particular note were the extremes of weather, dust or mud, and foremost was the loss of personal privacy. Many of the former internees mentioned specific features that they feel should be considered at the Monument. These features included the guard towers, root cellar, swimming hole, water tower and the barbed wire fence.

Honor Roll, Garden and Cemetery
Reconstruction of the Honor Roll in its original location is of great importance to the public. Others also think that the Monument should include a memorial listing all who were interned at Minidoka. Monuments such as the Japanese American Historical Plaza in Portland and the Vietnam Veteran’s Memorial in Washington D.C. were mentioned as examples. The public also thinks it is important to reconstruct the garden and to establish a place for quiet reflection and meditation. Another recommendation is that the Monument permanently displays an American flag at half-staff.

Monument Facilities

The public **suggests a variety of facilities** they want to include at or near the Monument. Many think it is important to provide overnight lodging nearby such as motels or RV/tent campsites. A few respondents suggest the Monument include a gift shop, restaurant and outdoor picnic area. Some people disagree, saying they don’t want the site commercialized with retail sales and amusements that are not related to the history and purpose of the Monument.

Partnerships and Outreach

Many of the respondents make suggestions for possible partnership opportunities. Suggested partners include the Wing Luke Asian Museum, Densho Project, Japanese American National Museum, Jerome Historical Society, Four River’s Cultural Center in Ontario, Oregon Nikkei Legacy Center, University of Washington, and University of California at Davis. The public repeatedly emphasizes how little younger generations of Americans know about the internment story and the existence of the camps. They focus on how important it is to bring the internment story to the classroom, not only for school children near the Monument, but as **an essential component of the curriculum of all American children**.

Next Steps

The National Park Service’s interdisciplinary planning team, in cooperation with the Wing Luke Asian Museum and Jones & Jones Architects and Landscape Architects, will be developing alternatives for site protection, development, management and public understanding of the Monument.

A range of alternatives will be published and distributed in the June/July 2003 newsletter. The Public will be invited to a series of workshops to discuss the range of alternatives in late July and early August 2003.



The Honor Roll displayed the names of the Minidokans serving in the U.S. military.
Photo Courtesy of the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley

Site of the Minidoka Internment National Monument

Minidoka News

Idaho Day of Remembrance

Idaho Governor, Dirk Kempthorne, signed a proclamation declaring February 19 an Idaho Day of Remembrance for the internment and incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II. The Day of Remembrance event was held in Boise on February 19, 2003, and it included 35 participants, many of whom were former Minidoka internees. Governor Kempthorne stated, “Your story should be told in every classroom and remembered in the halls of government in every generation. Your story reminds us of the mistakes of the past so that we do not repeat them. But it also reminds us of the strength of the human spirit. It reminds us that we are one people . . . all Americans—regardless of color, religion, or ethnic background. And it reminds us of the freedoms and opportunities that we must always cherish.”

June 27–29, 2003 Minidoka Activities

In collaboration with the Friends of Minidoka and the Japanese American Citizens’ League, the National Park Service will sponsor a series of events about Minidoka in Twin Falls and at the National Monument site. For more information, please contact the National Monument at (208)837-4793.

August 1–3, 2003 “Minidoka Remembered” Reunion

A group of former internees will host a Reunion and exhibits about Minidoka, including paintings by Kenjiro Nomura, photographs by Emily Hanako Momohara, and exhibits by the Densho Project, Nisei Veteran’s, Bainbridge Island Nikkei Community, and more. The National Park Service will host two public meetings at this event. For more information about the Reunion contact Gloria Shigeno at (425)649-0100.

National Park Service Collaborates with the Wing Luke Asian Museum

In Spring 2003, the Wing Luke Asian Museum will conduct a series of meetings with former Minidoka internees to gain further insight into their experiences at Minidoka and their priorities for future interpretation of the National Monument. The Wing Luke Asian Museum is located in Seattle’s Chinatown-International District. It is the only pan-Asian Pacific American museum in the nation, and has received both national and local recognition for its community-based and intergenerational work. For information about the Wing Luke Asian Museum, visit their website, www.wingluke.org.

Friends of Minidoka: A Newly Formed Non-Profit Organization

The Friends of Minidoka is devoted to serving as a network for exchanging information and engaging in education, historic preservation, and research projects, workshops, and conferences related to Minidoka. For more information about Friends of Minidoka, visit their website, www.friendsofminidoka.org.

Spud Cellar

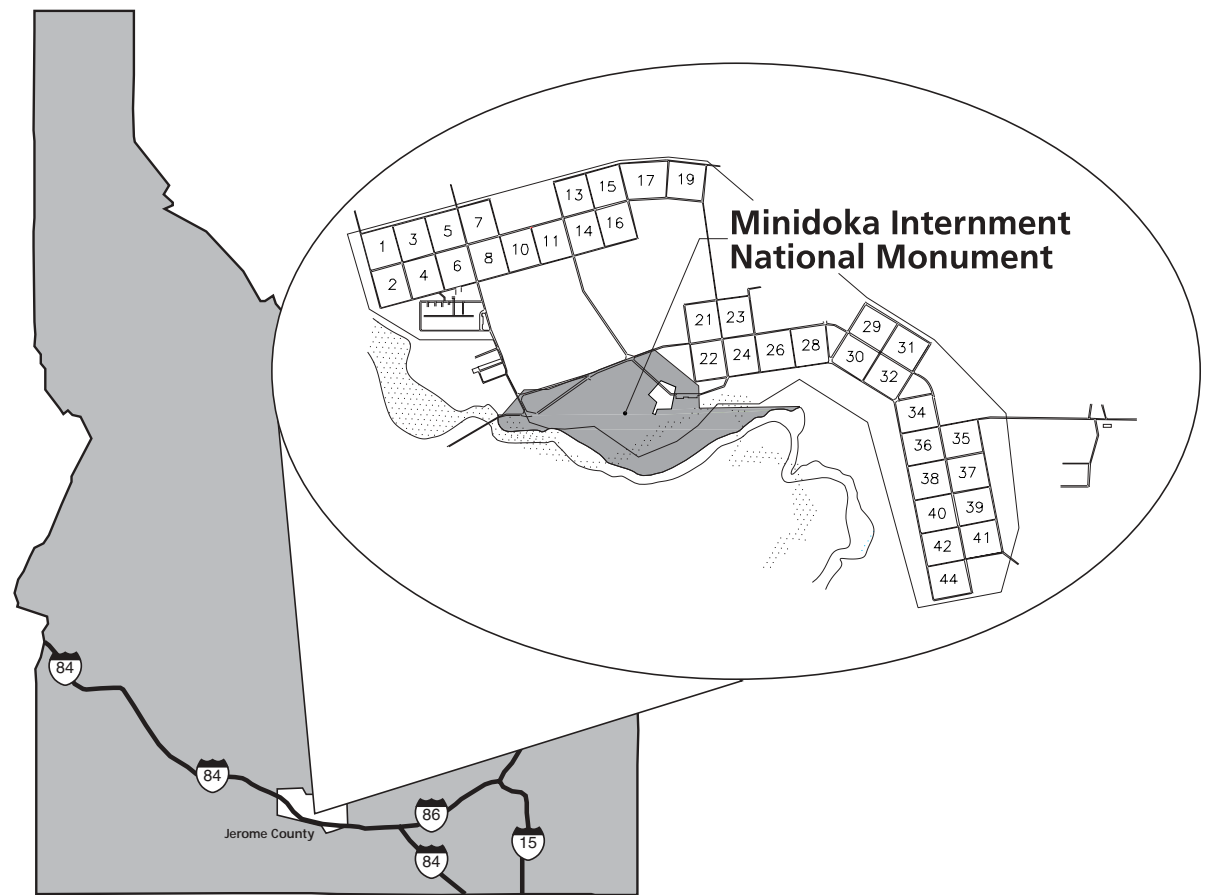
The spud cellar is one of the only standing historic structures on the Minidoka National Monument site today. Also, it is significant because it was constructed by Japanese American internees during World War II. Recently, sections of the cellar have caved in, and the structure is in risk of falling down. The National Park Service has secured funding to stabilize the structure and to ensure its long-term preservation. The project will begin in the spring 2003.

Archeology

Archeologist, Jeff Burton, will publish the results of archeological excavations performed at the entrance to Minidoka in August 2002. Archeological investigations will continue in summer 2003 with testing and mapping of sites associated with the camp.

Oral History Project

A multi-year oral history project begins this year to document the experiences of former internees and local residents with associations to the Hunt Camp.





National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Minidoka Internment National Monument
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EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA

June 1943. Minidoka Relocation Center, main administration buildings.
Photo courtesy National Archives and Records Administration

Planning Activity Schedule

1

Winter 2002

Gather Data/Establish Desired Future or Goals

- Establish purpose of Monument
- Participate in public workshops
- Identify Monument’s significance, issues, primary stories
- Submit comment sheet from newsletter
- Analyze and Summarize Public Scoping Comments

2

Summer 2003

Suggest Draft Alternatives

- Suggest range of alternatives to meet goals, address issues, express primary stories
- Participate in public workshops
- Submit comment sheet from newsletter

3

Spring 2004

Develop Draft GMP/EIS

- Analyze environmental impacts for each alternative
- Attend public workshops
- Review draft GMP/EIS
- Develop concept plans for Monument
- Submit comments
- Distribute draft GMP/EIS for public review/comment

4

Winter 2004

Revise Draft and Publish Final GMP/EIS

- Develop final GMP/EIS based on public response
- Distribute final GMP/EIS to the public

5

Ongoing

Begin Implementation

- Work with individuals, organizations, agencies, and communities on partnership activities
- Request funds for capital improvements

We are here!